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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/822,451	04/12/2004	William Perkins	SMA581/4-ICONUS	3184
22892	7590	06/26/2007	EXAMINER	
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			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/822,451	Applicant(s) PERKINS ET AL.	
	Examiner Vinit H. Patel	Art Unit 1764	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 April 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>19Nov04; 12Apr04</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-12 and 14-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Zednick et al., USP 6,089,022.

Regarding the following claims Zednick teaches:

1. A method of delivering liquefied natural gas (LNG) to a destination, comprising: supplying an amount of LNG (C4/L27-32) to gasification equipment 25; converting the LNG into natural gas (C4/L35-42); inserting the natural gas into a pipeline located offshore 14; and delivering the natural gas to an existing natural gas pipeline system 17a (C3/L64-C4/L42, Figs. 1 and 2).

2. The method as described in claim 1, wherein the supplying step further includes supplying the LNG using a ship 10 (Fig. 1).

4. The method as described in claim 1, wherein the gasification equipment is located on a barge 10 (carrier vessel, Fig. 1).

5. The method as described in claim 1, wherein the converting step further comprises applying heat to the LNG through a vaporizer 25 (Fig. 1).

6. A system for delivering liquefied natural gas (LNG) to a destination, comprising: a container of LNG 16; gasification equipment connected to the container of LNG 25 (Fig. 2), wherein the gasification equipment converts the LNG to natural gas; an offshore pipeline connected to the gasification equipment 13, 14, wherein the natural gas produced by the gasification equipment 25 is inserted into the offshore pipeline 14 thereby providing natural gas to entitles connected to the pipeline (C3/L64-C4/L42, Figs. 1 and 2).

7. The system as described in claim 6, wherein the container of LNG is a ship 10 (Fig. 1).

9. The system as described in claim 6, wherein the gasification equipment 25 is located on a barge 10 (Figs. 1 and 2).

10. The system as described in claim 6, further comprising a vaporizer 25 to apply heat to the LNG (Fig. 2).

11. A system for delivering liquefied natural gas (LNG) to a destination, comprising: a container means 10, 16 for containing LNG; a gasification means 25 for converting the LNG to natural gas, the gasification means 25 being connected to the container of LNG 16 (Fig. 2); an offshore pipeline connected to the gasification equipment, wherein the natural gas produced by the gasification means 25 is inserted into the offshore pipeline 13, 14 thereby providing natural gas to entitles connected to the pipeline (C3/L64-C4/L42, Figs. 1 and 2).

12. The system as described in claim 11, wherein the container means is a ship 10 (Fig. 1).

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14. The system as described in claim 11, wherein the gasification means is located on a barge 10 (Fig. 1).

15. The system as described in claim 11, further comprising a vaporization 25 means for vaporizing the LNG by applying heat (C4/L42-54, Fig. 2).

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by USPN 6,298,671 to Kennelley et al. The reference of Kennelley et al (Kennelley) teaches a process for transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG). According to Kennelley [and referring to figure 1], natural gas is removed from a subterranean source (11) and transported to an offshore platform (10). From this location, the gas is sent to an LNG plant (24) where the gas is liquefied. The LNG is subsequently placed on a ship (30) wherein the LNG is transported to a destination. At this destination, the LNG is regasified in a regasification platform (32). Here, the LNG, after being reconverted to the natural gas, is stored in a subterranean formation (44). The stored gas may then be removed via a well (50) to a platform (46). Thereafter, the gas is transported to a pipeline system (56) located on land. See column 3, line 34 to column, line 54. The reference further states that the regasification platform can be located either on land or offshore (column 4, lines 20-26).

In transporting the natural gas from the offshore platform to the pipeline system on land, the nature of the transportation system is well known and must necessarily and inherently be an offshore pipeline. As such, the claimed subject matter is anticipated by the teachings of Kennelley.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

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The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 3, 8 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zednick et al., USP 6,089,022 in view of Kennelley et al., USP 6,298,671.

Regarding claims 3, 8 and 13, Zednick teaches all of the limitations as applied to the claims above, but does not explicitly teach wherein the offshore pipeline is associated with an existing gas well (as best understood, a gas well located offshore).

Kennelley teaches an offshore pipeline 54 associated with an existing gas well 44 in a method for producing, transporting, storing and distributing natural gas (Abstract, C4/L27-44, Fig. 1), and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the offshore pipeline of Zednick to be associated with an existing gas well for the purpose to provide an efficient method of producing,

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transporting, storing and distributing natural gas produced from remote locations relative to the utilizing marketplace (C1/L9-44).

Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 6,298,671 to Kennelley et al.

The reference of Kennelley et al (Kennelley) teaches a process for transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG). According to Kennelley [and referring to figure 1] , natural gas is removed from a subterranean source (11) and transported to an offshore platform (10). From this location, the gas is sent to an LNG plant (24) where the gas is liquefied. The LNG is subsequently placed on a ship (30) wherein the LNG is transported to a destination. At this destination, the LNG is regasified in a regasification platform (32). Here, the LNG, after being reconverted to the natural gas, is stored in a subterranean formation (44). The stored gas may then be removed via a well (50) to a platform (46). Thereafter, the gas is transported to a pipeline system (56) located on land. See column 3, line 34 to column, line 54. The reference further states that the regasification platform can be located either on land or offshore (column 4, lines 20-26).

The Kennelley reference does not expressly state that the transportation of the natural gas from an offshore platform to the pipeline system (56) on shore is via an offshore pipeline. However, those skilled in this art would have found it obvious to use an offshore pipeline system to transport the natural gas from the offshore platform (46) to the pipeline system (56) located on land. The Kennelley reference does not expressly state that the platform is associated with an existing gas well, however, those skilled in this art would have found it obvious to use a platform with any well known gas

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supply including use with an existing gas well. The Kennelley reference does not expressly state that the gasification equipment is located on a barge, however, those skilled in this art would have found it obvious to locate the equipment on a barge because the barge is well known and is capable of containing the equipment. The Kennelley reference does not expressly state that the converting step comprises applying heat to the LNG through a vaporizer, however, those skilled in this art would have found it obvious to apply heat to the LNG through a vaporizer because the vaporizer equipment is suitable for use on a platform or on a barge.

As such, the claimed subject matter, taken as a whole, would have been obvious in view of the teachings of Kennelley.

Conclusion

This is a continuation of applicant's earlier Application No. 09/930,547. All claims are drawn to the same invention claimed in the earlier application and could have been finally rejected on the grounds and art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered in the earlier application. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL** even though it is a first action in this case. See MPEP § 706.07(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

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extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no, however, event will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Vinit H. Patel whose telephone number is (571) 272-0856. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Caldarola can be reached on (571) 272-1444. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


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